

Supplemental Report 5

Flanner House Higher Learning Center Detailed Performance Assessment and Profile



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▪ Grades served in 2003-04	9-12
▪ Enrollment in 2003-04	114 students
▪ Grades served at capacity	9-12
▪ Maximum school size at capacity	175 students

This supplemental report presents information about the school in three sections:

- Flanner House Higher Learning Center's Students (enrollment and demographic information)
- Performance at Flanner House Higher Learning Center
- Detailed Description of Flanner House Higher Learning Center's Programs and Activities (as provided by the school)

Flanner House Higher Learning Center's Students

Figure S5-1. Enrollment and demand for the Flanner House Higher Learning Center

	Number of students
Maximum possible enrollment in 2003-04 pursuant to charter	125
Number of students enrolled in 2003-04 ¹	114
Number of students on waiting list as of spring 2004 for 2004-05 school year ²	118

¹Source: Indiana Department of Education website, based on school's Pupil Enrollment Count reported every October.

²Source: School self-report of data, as of spring 2004. 2004 was the first time this information was collected in this manner; therefore, waiting list information for the 2003-04 school year is not available.

Figure S5-2. Flanner House Higher Learning Center student composition

Gender ¹		Race & Ethnicity ¹				Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch ²	Special Education ³	Limited English Proficient ⁴
Male	Female	African-American	Hispanic	Caucasian	Other			
43.9%	56.1%	88.6%	0%	11.4%	0%	97.6%	5.3%	0%

Note: See main report for comparative data.

¹Source: Indiana Department of Education website, based on school's Pupil Enrollment Count reported every October.

²Source: Indiana Department of Education. Data were obtained through the Indiana Department of Education's Division of School Finance from figures submitted to the Division by the school; this school does not participate in a nutrition program, and therefore the Department does not maintain lunch figures for this school in its databases in the same manner it does for schools with nutrition programs.

³Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Exceptional Learners, count reported December 2003.

⁴Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Language and Minority Programs, count reported March 2004.

Figure S5-3. Percentage of students in Flanner House Higher Learning Center ("FHHLC"), Indianapolis Public Schools ("IPS"), and Indiana ("IN") passing ISTEP+ tests at the beginning of the fall 2003 school year¹

	English			Math			Both (English & Math)		
	FHHLC	IPS	IN	FHHLC	IPS	IN	FHHLC	IPS	IN
10 th Graders	11%	38%	69%	3%	34%	67%	2%	27%	60%

Source: Indiana Department of Education.

¹Since the charter school's students took these tests near the beginning of the school year, these percentages represent starting levels of performance of the charter students, not how much the students learned at Flanner House Higher Learning Center.

Performance at Flanner House Higher Learning Center

The section below describes Flanner House Higher Learning Center's performance over its first school year by addressing the common performance indicators in the Mayor's Charter School Performance Framework. The complete Performance Framework may be viewed on-line at <http://www.indygov.org/eGov/Mayor/Education/Charter/Accountability/2004/>.

Is the educational program a success?

Is the school making adequate yearly academic progress, as measured by the Indiana Department of Education's system of accountability?

Performance on the statewide assessment. Though Flanner House Higher Learning Center students took the state's ISTEP+ exams, they did so shortly after the school opened at the beginning of the school year. As a result, the school's results on the state tests reflect students' starting levels of academic achievement rather than the school's performance. Because these scores do not reflect on the success of the school's educational program, they are not included under this performance question. See Figure S5-3 above for information about the school's ISTEP+ scores in fall 2003.

Adequate Yearly Progress. Information about Adequate Yearly Progress is not available for this school because it just completed its first year of operation.

Are students making substantial gains over time?

Test score analysis. Flanner House Higher Learning Center administered the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) exam to its students in grades nine through twelve in fall 2003 and spring 2004. Due to several factors, the number of students included in the following analysis is very small, ranging from 4 to 16 students across the subjects and grades. Flanner House Higher Learning Center serves a population of students who have previously dropped out of school altogether and are returning to school with a variety of challenges. Students come and go throughout the school year because they only attend the school long enough to complete their graduation requirements or because their other work and family commitments prevent them from continuing their attendance. Since only students who participated in the fall *and* spring are included in the analysis, the number of students examined is very small. With such small numbers, it is unwise to draw strong conclusions from these results; the margin for error is very large. Over time, the school's multi-year record will provide a more valid assessment of its success with students.

Each number in Figure S5-4 indicates the percentage change in the average test score achieved in a particular grade and subject from fall to spring. For example, the -1.2 in the first row indicates that the average reading score for students who were 9th graders was 1.2% lower in spring 2004 than in fall 2003.

Figure S5-4. Percentage change in average NWEA MAP scores between fall 2003 and spring 2004 at Flanner House Higher Learning Center

	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
Reading	-1.2	-8.3	-3.3	-3.3
Math	+2.4	-2.7	+0.3	-1.0
Language	-1.1	-3.7	+0.1	-3.8

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data 2004," prepared by New American Schools, Alexandria, VA, 2004.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

Figure S5-4 shows that except for 9th grade math and 11th grade math and language, students did not make progress, on average, between fall 2003 and spring 2004. In many grades and subjects, students scored lower on average in spring 2004 than they did at the beginning of the school year.

City of Indianapolis, Office of the Mayor

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But how large were these changes? Analysts at New American Schools (NAS) aimed to use two methods to answer that question. First, they compared the progress of Flanner House Higher Learning Center's students to that of other students in Indiana and nationally who took the same exams at the same points in their academic careers ("comparative gains and losses"). Second, they sought to determine whether students' gains were large enough for them to reach proficiency over time ("sufficient gains"). However, this second analysis was not possible for Flanner House Higher Learning Center because NWEA does not provide proficiency levels for grades 9 through 12.

Comparative gains and losses. Since the NWEA MAP is a national standardized test, we can ask the following question: if we ranked all the students in Indiana and across the country who took the NWEA MAP, where would *Flanner House Higher Learning Center students stand on average* in those rankings?

Figures S5-5 and S5-6 provide the answer. For example, the first row of Figure S5-5 shows how 9th graders at Flanner House Higher Learning Center performed in reading. In fall 2003, on average 9th graders at Flanner House Higher Learning Center scored as well as or better than 16% of all students in Indiana in reading. We call this number, 16, Flanner House Higher Learning Center's "Fall 2003 Average Percentile" for 9th graders in reading. The next column shows that by spring 2004, on average Flanner House Higher Learning Center 9th graders performed as well as or better than just 8% of all students in Indiana. The school's "Spring 2004 Average Percentile" was 8. What does this mean? It means that, on average, Higher Learning Center's 9th graders *moved down in the statewide ranking* in reading between fall 2003 and spring 2004. So on the right side of Figure S5-5, we indicate that Higher Learning Center students "lost ground" versus students in Indiana. Figure S5-6 displays the same information, but compares students' performance to their peers *nationally*.

As displayed in Figures S5-5 and S5-6, it is evident that Flanner House Higher Learning Center students, on average, lost ground relative to their Indiana and national peers in all grades and subjects. In three of the twelve cases, 9th grade math and 11th grade math and language, students did progress, as Figure S5-4 illustrates, but not as much as their peers in Indiana and nationally.

Figure S5-5. INDIANA comparison: Academic progress of Flanner House Higher Learning Center students, fall 2003 through spring 2004

Grade/ subject		Fall 2003 Average Percentile	Spring 2004 Average Percentile	Gained ground vs. students in Indiana	Stayed even with students in Indiana	Lost ground vs. students in Indiana
9 th Grade	Reading	16	8			✓
	Math	19	12			✓
	Language	19	9			✓
10 th Grade	Reading	14	3			✓
	Math	11	3			✓
	Language	16	9			✓
11 th Grade	Reading	12	4			✓
	Math	25	6			✓
	Language	21	20			✓
12 th Grade	Reading	15	1			✓
	Math	16	3			✓
	Language	26	12			✓

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data 2004," prepared by New American Schools, Alexandria, VA, 2004.

Note: Conclusions about whether students gained or lost ground were based on simple comparisons of fall and spring percentiles.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

Figure S5-6. NATIONAL comparison: Academic progress of Flanner House Higher Learning Center students, fall 2003 through spring 2004

Grade/ subject		Fall 2003 Average Percentile	Spring 2004 Average Percentile	Gained ground vs. students nationally	Stayed even with students nationally	Lost ground vs. students nationally
9 th Grade	Reading	18	13			✓
	Math	20	13			✓
	Language	22	14			✓
10 th Grade	Reading	20	3			✓
	Math	20	3			✓
	Language	23	8			✓
11 th Grade	Reading	12	4			✓
	Math	25	6			✓
	Language	21	20			✓
12 th Grade	Reading	15	1			✓
	Math	16	3			✓
	Language	26	12			✓

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data 2004," prepared by New American Schools, Alexandria, VA, 2004.

Note: Conclusions about whether students gained or lost ground were based on simple comparisons of fall and spring percentiles.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

Is the organization effective and well-run?

Is the school in sound fiscal health? The Mayor's Office commissioned a review of each school's finances. A summary of the school's finances, including financial statements, appears in Supplemental Report 6. Reviews by the outside accounting firm revealed that Flanner House Higher Learning Center encountered challenges related to accounting and finance in 2003-04, including timely bill payments and accurate allocation of salaries and expenses between the school and the Flanner House Elementary School. By June 30, 2004, however, the school satisfactorily resolved the issues related to the salary and expense allocations between both schools. The executive director of Flanner House, Inc. and the school's business manager have worked with the school's bookkeeper to implement new procedures for the 2004-05 school year to ensure that all expenses continue to be allocated correctly.

Sixty-one percent of parents reported their satisfaction with the school's finances, while 17% reported they "don't know." At the same time, just 25% of school staff surveyed at Flanner House Higher Learning Center reported they are satisfied with the school's finances.

Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?

According to a report submitted by the school to the Indiana Department of Education, the school's attendance rate was 58.3% in 2003-04 (see Figure S5-7). The school expects students to attend, on average, 20 hours per week; thus, this figure was used by the school (as recommended by the Department) as the standard for calculating the school's attendance rate. The average student was in attendance 11.7 hours a week, or 58.3% of the 20-hour weekly expectation. The unique design of this school allows students to attend when it makes most sense for them based upon their other personal commitments related to work and family. Therefore, attendance for some students is sporadic through the year; for example, a student may be enrolled for the length of the school year but may not attend for 3 weeks at one time because of a job.

Of parents surveyed, 96% expressed their intention to continue to enroll their children in the school as long as the school serves students their children's age. On a scale of 1 (not at all likely) to 5 (extremely likely), parents on average rated their likelihood of recommending the school to other parents or guardians as a good place to attend at 4.50. Staff members on average rated their likelihood at 4.00 on the same question.

Figure S5-7. Flanner House Higher Learning Center attendance rate in 2003-04 school year

	Attendance rate
Flanner House Higher Learning Center ¹	58.3%
Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) ²	94.1%
All Indiana Public Schools ²	95.9%

¹Source: School self-report.

²Source: Indiana Department of Education website.

Is the school's Board active and competent in its oversight? The governance review conducted by the Mayor's Office, which included a review of Board meeting minutes, showed that the Board of Directors was scheduled to meet monthly during the year. The Mayor's Office attempted to attend one Board meeting, but the meeting was cancelled. From August 2003 to July 2004, the Board cancelled five meetings, none of which was rescheduled. The governance review recommended that the Board should ensure that meetings are rescheduled promptly in order to conduct sufficient oversight of school business.

A review of Board meeting minutes shows that the Board is informed of issues related to the school through reports that are presented by staff members regarding finances, facilities, and academics. The Executive Director of Flanner House, Inc. also provides a report, as does the Board president. The review of the Board meeting minutes did not note Board discussion, if any, of the items presented in the reports. In order to fully inform the public of Board discussion and maintain an accurate record for the school, the review suggested that the minutes reflect specific questions and comments by Board members during the meeting, especially in response to the presentation of reports.

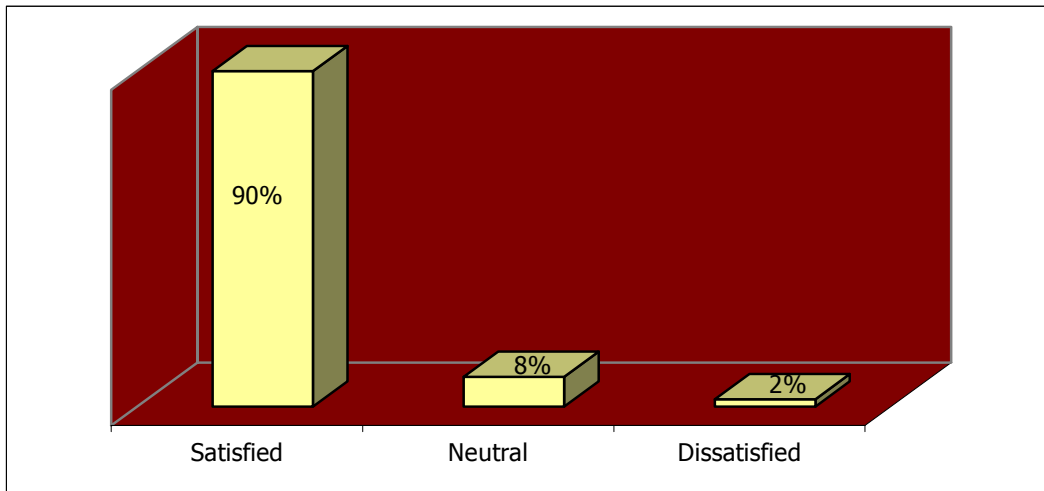
A review of the minutes also found many typographical errors that could cause confusion for an external reader. Because the Board meeting minutes are public documents, the review advised that the school take proper care to ensure that the minutes are correct and orderly prior to approval by the Board.

The expert site visit team suggested that the school "...consider ways to utilize the strengths and experience of the Board to benefit the school."

Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school? Ninety percent of Flanner House Higher Learning Center parents reported they were satisfied overall with their charter school, as shown in Figure S5-8. Figure S5-9 shows the percentage of parents who were satisfied with specific aspects of the school as well as the average satisfaction rate for each aspect.

Based on parent comments, the expert site visit team reported that parents "...deeply respect, appreciate and support the Flanner House Higher Learning Center and the doors it is opening for their students."

Figure S5-8. Overall parent satisfaction with Flanner House Higher Learning Center



Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents administered in spring 2004 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. "Satisfied" includes "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses. "Dissatisfied" includes "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses.

Figure S5-9. Parent satisfaction with features at Flanner House Higher Learning Center

School Feature	Average rate of satisfaction ¹ (5=Very Satisfied)	Satisfied ²	Neutral	Dissatisfied ³
School size	4.30	87%	9%	4%
Class size	4.30	91%	4%	4%
Length of school day	4.74	96%	4%	0%
Length of school year	4.48	91%	4%	4%
Ability of school to fulfill mission	4.30	83%	13%	4%
Individualized attention	4.41	91%	5%	5%
Academic standards/expectations	4.48	96%	4%	0%
Curriculum	4.35	91%	9%	0%
Teaching quality	4.35	83%	17%	0%
Instructional quality, language arts	4.27	78%	13%	4%
Instructional quality, mathematics	3.91	65%	17%	13%
Materials to support curriculum	4.09	70%	13%	13%
Innovation in teaching practices	4.10	68%	18%	9%
Computers and other technology	4.70	100%	0%	0%
Classroom management/behavior	3.87	65%	26%	9%
Communication from the school	3.91	61%	17%	17%
Parent information about students	4.04	74%	17%	9%
Accessibility/openness to parents	4.45	86%	14%	0%
Parent participation opportunities	4.29	78%	9%	4%
Parent involvement	4.25	74%	9%	4%
Teacher/student school pride	4.14	70%	17%	4%
Relationship with local community	4.05	61%	17%	4%
Extracurricular activities	3.83	57%	4%	17%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents administered in spring 2004 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and "don't know" responses.

¹Satisfaction rated on a scale of 1-5: 1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied. Rating calculations do not include "don't know" responses.

²Includes "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses.

³Includes "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses.

Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?

Governance reviews conducted by the Mayor's Office showed that the school administration experienced challenges related to organizational leadership during the 2003-04 school year that made it difficult for the school to satisfactorily meet important obligations to the state and the Mayor's Office, as detailed in the next section of this supplemental report.

Of particular note, the school principal resigned from the school in May 2004, and the school is currently working to fill this position. The expert site visit team noted that a high priority for the school should be to hire a new principal. The team further recommended that the school focus on "...ensuring that key academic positions are filled by experienced, qualified persons. The school should ensure that staffing aligns with the mission and students' learning goals and needs."

Furthermore, while the expert site visit team reported that school administrators continue to communicate with staff about consistent implementation of school policies, it recommended that Flanner House Higher Learning Center "...develop and/or ensure consistent implementation of procedures and policies related to conditions of employment, admissions procedures, maintaining and

managing a waitlist, student advisories, graduation requirements, testing protocols and provision of progress reports.”

No staff members reported that they were satisfied by the leadership provided by their school’s administration, but 75% reported they were “neutral” about the school leadership. Of parents surveyed, three-quarters reported they were satisfied with the people running Flanner House Higher Learning Center. Additionally, no staff members reported they were satisfied with the level of teacher involvement with school decisions, but 50% reported they were “neutral” in this area.

Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations related to: organizational structure and governance obligations; physical plants that are safe and conducive to learning; fair and appropriate pupil enrollment processes; reasonable and safe transportation options available to eligible students; and legal obligations related to access and services to special needs and English as a second language students?

Flanner House Higher Learning Center satisfactorily met its obligations in 2003-04 in providing access to students across Indianapolis. Neither the Mayor’s Office’s internal systems nor the expert site visit team indicated any significant concerns related to these obligations.

At the annual request of the Mayor’s Office, the Division of Exceptional Learners at the Indiana Department of Education conducts on-site reviews of the special education services provided by Mayor-sponsored charter schools completing their first year of operation. According to Robert Marra, Associate Superintendent of the Indiana Department of Education in the Division of Exceptional Learners, “The school’s director demonstrated a real interest in ensuring the school’s compliance with special education requirements. The school also has a low ratio of teachers to students with disabilities.”

Mr. Marra described the issues identified during the Department’s visit to the school as “fully correctable, and the school should make every effort to address the issues swiftly. The school needs to take steps to ensure that systems are in place for tracking and following up on Individualized Education Plans (IEP). The school also needs to ensure the timely evaluation of students who are believed to be in need of special education services. Additionally, the IEPs should specify the actual services students require and the timeframe for providing those services in order to fully understand what was agreed upon during the case conferences.”

The school faced challenges in meeting some of its important obligations to submit timely and accurate reports, make information available to the Mayor’s Office and meet teacher licensure requirements. Of particular note, the school did not submit information to the Indiana Department of Education in a timely manner (e.g., as related to: average daily membership, textbook reimbursements, and other grants). In a few instances, the Department extended deadlines to accommodate the school; the school still struggled, however, to submit information by the extended deadline dates. In another instance, the school’s administration incorrectly reported the number of students eligible for Title I funding. The school reported students who were over 17 years of age as eligible for Title I funds in the 2003-04 Title I count, although federal regulations make students over 17 ineligible for Title I funding. As a result, the school’s Title I allocation for 2003-04 was too high. Currently, the school’s administration is working with the Department to resolve the issue.

In addition, FHHLC employed one teacher in 2003-04 that did not hold an Indiana teaching license and was not in the process of enrolling in an approved Transition to Teaching program as required by

the state's charter school law. The Mayor's Office worked closely with the school and the Indiana Professional Standards Board to address this issue. After careful review of the situation, the school has been advised by the Indiana Professional Standards Board that teachers who do not hold Indiana teaching licenses and who have not yet enrolled in a Transition to Teaching program should apply for and receive emergency licenses from the Professional Standards Board prior to the beginning of the 04-05 school year in order to be eligible to teach in a charter school. The emergency licenses will then permit the teachers to work towards certification, either through Transition to Teaching or another approved certification program. The teacher in question at Flanner House Higher Learning Center has satisfactorily applied for the emergency license.

Overall, the school has not satisfactorily maintained the compliance binder, which is critical to the Mayor's Office's ability to determine whether the school has met its obligations. The binder contains all of the school's governance, management, and organizational documents and is reviewed by the Mayor's Office on a monthly basis to monitor school compliance with laws and other requirements. The school has, however, shown some progress toward improving the maintenance of the compliance binder.

Figure S5-10 displays parent and staff survey responses to questions about school operations.

Figure S5-10. Parent and school staff satisfaction with Flanner House Higher Learning Center operations

School Feature	Parents				School Staff			
	Average rate of satisfaction ¹ (5=Very Satisfied)	Satisfied ²	Neutral	Dissatisfied ³	Average rate of satisfaction ¹ (5=Very Satisfied)	Satisfied ²	Neutral	Dissatisfied ³
Services for special needs students ^{4,5}	4.29	86%	0%	14%	3.33	67%	0%	33%
School leadership	4.24	74%	13%	4%	2.75	0%	75%	25%
School finances	4.21	61%	22%	0%	2.25	25%	0%	75%
Safety	4.17	74%	22%	4%	4.00	75%	25%	0%
School facilities	4.14	74%	17%	4%	3.00	25%	50%	25%
Enrollment process	3.55	57%	26%	13%	2.75	25%	25%	50%
Transportation ⁶	4.53	87%	13%	0%	2.67	0%	50%	25%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents and staffs administered in spring 2004 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and "don't know" responses.

¹Satisfaction rated on a scale of 1-5: 1= very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied. Rating calculations do not include "don't know" responses.

²Includes "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses.

³Includes "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses.

⁴Special needs students include those for whom English is a second language or who have disabilities, academic difficulties, etc.

⁵Only parents of children with special needs in the charter school responded to this question. Only staff members with instructional responsibilities and students with special needs in their classroom responded to this question.

⁶Only parents whose children used the school's transportation services in the 2003-04 school year responded to this question.

Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders? The expert site visit team found that students, parents, and staff members all "...understand and support the mission of the

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school and believe that the school is, in many ways, well-designed to serve at-risk students who have dropped out of high school – including the easy access, extended hours, and the environment [created by] and attitudes of the staff in terms of effectively providing structure and support for students.”

At the same time, the team suggested that the school develop an “...explicit, consistent process to ensure that parents and students have a deep understanding of the vision and options that the Flanner House Higher Learning Center affords,” particularly as related to:

- the type of learning experience it offers: specify whether the school aims to serve students seeking a traditional learning experience (with classes and seminars), a non-traditional experience (with the core focus on on-line learning and completion of credits), or both;
- the extra-curricular opportunities available: specify whether the school aims to provide opportunities available in a traditional high school setting (e.g., clubs, proms, etc.); and
- the preparation the school provides for post-graduation opportunities such as employment or college.

Seventy-five percent of staff members surveyed reported that they were aware of the goals of the school, and 67% believed the goals were being met across the school “fairly well.”

Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade? As Figures S5-9 and S5-11 illustrate, 70% of Flanner House Higher Learning Center parents and 50% of staff members reported that they were satisfied with their school’s materials to support the curriculum. The site visit team commended the school on the computer labs and software it provides to support the A+ on-line curriculum. The team also noted that students reported enjoying and benefiting from elective courses such as life skills and sign language and from project-based assignments designed to supplement the on-line curriculum.

Figure S5-11. School staff satisfaction with features at Flanner House Higher Learning Center

School Feature	Average rate of satisfaction ¹ (5=Very Satisfied)	Satisfied ²	Neutral	Dissatisfied ³
School size	4.25	100%	0%	0%
Class size	4.00	75%	25%	0%
Length of school day	4.00	75%	0%	25%
Length of school year	2.50	25%	25%	50%
Ability of school to fulfill mission	3.00	25%	50%	25%
Individualized attention	4.50	100%	0%	0%
Academic standards/expectations	4.50	100%	0%	0%
Curriculum	4.75	100%	0%	0%
Teaching quality	4.00	50%	50%	0%
Instructional quality, language arts	4.00	50%	50%	0%
Instructional quality, mathematics	1.75	0%	25%	75%
Materials to support curriculum	3.25	50%	25%	25%
Innovation in teaching practices	5.00	100%	0%	0%
Computers and other technology	4.75	100%	0%	0%
Classroom management/behavior	4.00	75%	25%	0%
Communication from the school	3.75	75%	25%	0%
Parent information about students	3.50	50%	50%	0%
Accessibility/openness to parents	4.00	100%	0%	0%
Parent participation opportunities	3.50	50%	50%	0%
Parent involvement	3.00	0%	100%	0%
Teacher/student school pride	3.50	75%	0%	25%
Relationship with local community	3.00	50%	25%	25%
Extracurricular activities	1.75	0%	25%	75%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school staffs administered in spring 2004 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Satisfaction percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and "don't know" responses.

¹Satisfaction rated on a scale of 1-5: 1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied. Rating calculations do not include "don't know" responses.

²Includes "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses.

³Includes "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses.

Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction? The expert site team noted that "students demonstrate proficiency in the use of A+, and many students are aware of their own progress and have clear educational goals and timelines." As Figures S5-9 and S5-11 illustrate, 96% of parents and all staff members reported they were satisfied with the academic standards for their students.

Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success? The expert site visit team reported that "the school is attracting its intended student population (at-risk students who have dropped out of school) and providing a caring and supportive environment for students." All surveyed constituents reported to the team that "...the school provides a climate that strongly promotes student success and that staff is dedicated to providing a good experience for students." The team commended the school on its exemplary wrap-around services, which are critical to engaging the school's target student population, such as "...free child care, transportation tokens, health care, counseling, scholarships for college, etc."

As Figure S5-10 shows, nearly three-quarters of parents and three-quarters of staff members surveyed reported their satisfaction with school safety. Additionally, on a scale of one (very

dissatisfied) to five (very satisfied), parents and staff members surveyed on average rated their satisfaction with classroom management and student behavior at 3.87 and 4.00 respectively. Seventy percent of parents and 75% of staff members surveyed reported they were satisfied with the sense of pride students and teachers have in their school. As illustrated in Figure S5-9 and S5-11 respectively, 78% of parents and 50% of staff members surveyed reported satisfaction with the opportunities available for parent participation. Nearly three-quarters of parents surveyed were satisfied with the levels of parent involvement at Flanner House Higher Learning Center, whereas 100% of staff members said they were “neutral” about the levels of parent involvement.

Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school’s mission? The expert site visit team cited the “growing body of research that indicates the on-line curriculum and its attendant assessment system provide a good delivery mechanism for the learning needs and styles of the Higher Learning Center population.” For students new to the school, the on-line system is reported to be especially critical because such a system facilitates “...success and provides reinforcement, thus allowing students to develop a greater sense of control over and responsibility for their learning and education.”

Aside from the on-line learning experience, however, the team recommended that the school could better meet plans outlined in the charter application by “...expanding and strengthening its implementation of project-/community-based learning, elective courses to enrich the curriculum, classroom experiences and materials to supplement A+, [support] for post graduation awareness and readiness, and alternative assessments...”

Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful? As shown in Figure S5-9, 61% of Flanner House Higher Learning Center parents reported that they were satisfied with communication from their school, such as about special activities, events, and meetings. Nearly three-quarters of parents and half of the school staff also reported they were satisfied with the information parents receive about student learning, as illustrated in Figures S5-9 and S5-11 respectively.

Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively? The site visit team found that the school needs to “...ensure that throughout the day, students have access to teachers with adequate expertise to support their learning, especially for mathematics and science.” Seventy-five percent of staff members reported their dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction the school provides for mathematics.

Figure S5-12 shows how staff members responded to a survey about their satisfaction with professional features of their school.

Figure S5-12. Staff satisfaction with Flanner House Higher Learning Center's professional features

School Feature	Average rate of satisfaction ¹ (5=Very Satisfied)	Satisfied ²	Neutral	Dissatisfied ³
Competitive salary structure	2.25	25%	0%	75%
Competitive benefits (e.g., health insurance, etc.)	2.50	25%	0%	75%
Work environment	3.50	50%	50%	0%
Amount of paperwork required	3.75	75%	25%	0%
Opportunities for professional development	3.75	75%	25%	0%
Evaluation or assessment of performance	3.75	75%	25%	0%
Hours spent engaged in classroom instruction ⁴	4.00	100%	0%	0%
Hours spent engaged in other activities ⁴	3.50	75%	0%	25%
Time allowed for planning and preparation ⁴	2.50	0%	50%	50%
Level of teacher autonomy in the classroom ⁴	4.00	100%	0%	0%
Level of teacher involvement in school decisions ⁴	2.67	0%	50%	25%
Teachers' non-teaching responsibilities ⁴	3.00	50%	25%	25%
Time staff spend together discussing individual student needs ⁴	3.00	50%	25%	25%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school staffs administered in spring 2004 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Satisfaction percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and "don't know" responses.

¹Satisfaction rated on a scale of 1-5: 1= very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied. Rating calculations do not include "don't know" responses.

²Includes "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses.

³Includes "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses.

⁴Only staff members with instructional responsibilities responded to this question.

Detailed Description of Flanner House Higher Learning Center's Programs and Activities

Source: The information below was provided by the school to the Mayor's Office. It is provided here to offer a more detailed picture of the school's programs and activities.

Mission, philosophy, and educational program

The mission of Flanner House Higher Learning Center is to provide an alternative learning environment, adaptable to diverse learning styles and lifestyle circumstances, to enable students to obtain not only an academic high school diploma but also to master the skills they will need to be successful in higher education, in a career setting, and in life overall.

The Higher Learning Center's small-school setting is designed to serve students who previously have dropped out of high school by helping them and their families overcome many of life's obstacles and accept the challenges of returning to school voluntarily. Many students at the Higher Learning Center have very real and pressing personal, social, family and/or financial issues that pose great difficulties for them to complete their education and fully participate in rewarding and meaningful lives and careers. At the Higher Learning Center, parents and families, the community, and teachers are brought together to guide, support and challenge students as they overcome these obstacles to successfully complete their education. Utilizing the school's location on the Flanner House of Indianapolis campus, wrap-around services are made available to connect students to child support, emergency food, transportation, and shelter assistance in order to remove traditional barriers that

often keep this population of students from returning to or completing school. Child care is available to children of students on-site at the Flanner House Child Development Center.

The Higher Learning Center is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, with flexible scheduling so that students can participate in school while still working or honoring other commitments such as obligations to their families. Students typically attend school for six hours per day.

The school utilizes the HUDDLE (Help Undo The Digital Divide By Learning Electronically) approach to re-engaging students in learning by setting expectations for higher education and emphasizing computer-based instruction. HUDDLE, originally developed for a dropout recovery program in Topeka, Kansas, is now used in 40 schools serving at-risk student populations in a variety of settings. Teachers guide students through lessons using the A+ Learning System on-line curriculum. This self-paced instructional approach is designed so that students quickly build self-esteem and develop confidence in their ability to learn. Teachers work with students to integrate additional performance- and project-based activities that develop critical skills in real world settings.

A homeless teen enrolled last year at the Flanner House Higher Learning Center and successfully graduated in December 2003. This young man had attended eight high schools prior to enrolling at the Higher Learning Center – four in Detroit, and four in the Indianapolis metropolitan area. He needed only six additional credit hours to graduate, but his life circumstances had kept him out of school for over a year. The social support services at Flanner House Higher Learning Center helped this student re-engage in school in order to complete the remaining credits. With the assistance of a scholarship from USA Funds, he is now pursuing a Bachelor's degree at Martin University.

Academic programs and initiatives

- *First Graduating Class.* A number of dropout students who enrolled in the Higher Learning Center this year were only a few credits short of obtaining a high school diploma. Nine students, including many who were out of school for over a year, were able to complete these credits. Six of them also passed the GQE and graduated with high school diplomas during the school's first year. One began attending college in January, and four more plan to enroll in college in the fall.
- *Frequent Student Assessment.* Upon first enrolling in school, each student is assessed in all subject areas using the A+ Learning System software. With the aid of computer tracking, all students know precisely what they have learned at the end of each day and what they must accomplish in order to graduate. The school's teachers can continuously monitor each student's progress in learning and their level of achievement.
- *Advisory Groups.* Each staff member serves as an advisor to a small group of students and monitors each student's academic progress, college and career development, and attendance. Advisors work collaboratively with parents, students, and community agencies to resolve issues that inhibit a student's progress.
- *Project-Based Activities.* To complement the computer-based instruction, students are actively engaged in projects that use literature and hands-on interdisciplinary projects as the foundation for study. For example, a Higher Learning Center student fulfilled biology and math requirements by volunteering at the Indianapolis Water Company to learn about the company and the water purification process. To complete the project, the student taught his peers

The A+ Learning System computer-based curriculum was used to provide home-based instruction via the Internet to a pregnant student who was confined to her home for an extended period of bed rest. The school loaned her a laptop computer and was successful in helping her complete schoolwork at home. This arrangement enabled her to graduate in January, whereas in another educational setting, her life situation might have forced her to drop out of school.

about water purification, distribution and dispersal. To fulfill requirements for government and civics course requirements, Higher Learning Center students participated in 80 hours of instruction on the electoral process and election law, and provided assistance to elections staff by working at the polls on Election Day.

- *Life Skills Curriculum.* The Higher Learning Center designed a life skills curriculum that allows students to share their personal, real-world experiences through group and study circles. The life skills curriculum is a blend of character building, decision-making, goal-setting, and behavioral management. The goal of the life skills curriculum is to prepare students to think critically about their circumstances and to help them overcome the challenges they face in achieving their educational and career goals.
- *American Sign Language.* One of the Higher Learning Center teachers offers an elective class in American Sign Language, enabling students to obtain foreign language credits and effectively communicate with members of the deaf community.

Parent involvement

- *Parent Council.* The school's Parent Council provides a voice for parent interests and concerns. The Parent Council assists with planning school events, fundraising, and connecting students with mentors and community-based educational opportunities.
- *Parent Liaison.* The school shares a parent liaison with Flanner House Elementary School to assist the school's staff, parents, and students in obtaining the services each student needs to ensure success in school. The liaison conducts a parent survey, organizes parent conferences, and contacts parents by phone, mail and/or home visits with regard to the students' school conduct, academic performance, healthcare, and job search. She also refers parents to the school's guidance counselor and/or staff at the Flanner House Multi-Service Center when they are in need of social services such as housing assistance or child support.

Supplemental programs and activities

- *College Admissions Guidance and Support.* The school provides workshops on preparing for college, including how to fill out necessary paperwork for financial aid and college admission. In 2003-04, the school's guidance counselor and teachers took students to visit and sit in on classes at Martin University and Ivy Tech State College. In addition, the school offers ACT and SAT test preparation and one-on-one tutoring to prepare students to take these college admissions tests.
- *Student Supports.* The school has a full-time guidance counselor to coordinate wrap-around services for students and families from the Flanner House Multi-Service Center and other agencies.
- *Student Council.* Higher Learning Center students took the initiative to create a Student Council last fall to motivate one another to stay in school and take responsibility for their own education. The Council organized a food pitch-in and awards party for their Christmas celebration in December 2003. The Council also organized quarterly birthday celebrations.

Community partnerships and donations

- *USA Funds Scholarship.* A \$350,000 scholarship fund donated by USA Funds is available to students who attend college after graduating from the Higher Learning Center. One recent graduate has already taken advantage of this opportunity and is now attending Martin University. Individual scholarships may be fully funded depending on need and academic performance.
- *Butler University Student Tutors.* Through a partnership with Butler University, two college student tutors were available at the school several times each week throughout the school year. Higher Learning Center students worked with these college students on math and science projects.
- *Vincennes University "Black Male Initiative" Pre-College Program.* This minority student college program is a one-week residential experience held on the Vincennes University campus to give hands-on experiences to prospective first generation college attendees. Outstanding high school

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juniors and seniors are nominated by teacher and counselors for the free program. Five Higher Learning Center students attended during summer 2004.

- *Keys to Work Career Experiences.* Teachers arranged field experiences and job-shadowing for six students through a nonprofit organization called Keys to Work. Keys to Work provides job preparation programs for students 16 and older, including various skill trainings and assessments, and provides job-placement support to Higher Learning Center students. Experiences this year included one student who job-shadowed at a local utility and five who participated in the electoral process.
- *Health Education.* Through a grant from the Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Agency, a health educator from the Flanner House Multi-Service Center presented a tobacco cessation workshop. This program provided information, in an age-appropriate style, about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs so that students make informed choices. Smoking students in the class used a carbon monoxide machine to measure the amount of nicotine in their lungs. As a result, one student enrolled in a tobacco cessation program and successfully quit smoking.
- *Indiana Black Expo Community Service Partnership.* Indiana Black Expo provides Higher Learning Center students with service-learning opportunities. For example, last year students volunteered at Indiana Black Expo offices and at two major community events, Circle City Classic and Indiana Women's Expo.
- *Indiana Dollars for Scholars.* The school is working with this statewide network of community-based organizations to raise funds for college tuition scholarships for the school's graduates.

Staffing

- *Professional Development.* Teachers participate in a minimum of 6-8 professional development activities each year. Recent topics included: dropout recovery, black male initiatives, the school's HUDDLE model to connect technology and learning, and the A+ Learning System software program and its alignment with state standards. In addition, some of the school's teachers have given presentations at local and national education conferences on topics such as multicultural education, alternative education, and student portfolios.
- *Buddy Teaching and Learning Center (BTLC).* The Higher Learning Center's teachers attend BTLC professional development opportunities during the school year. BTLC is a state-funded teacher training center in Indianapolis that runs workshops and institutes, particularly on teaching practices that combine technology with curriculum. Higher Learning Center teachers have attended sessions to learn about using software tools in the classroom and how to work with unmotivated students.
- *Evaluations.* Early in the first school year, the principal conducted evaluations primarily intended to provide early feedback on areas of improvement for each teacher. After collecting additional information on each teacher throughout the school year, the principal conducted more comprehensive, formal evaluations of the teachers' performance.

School management

- Administrators at the school have delineated roles and responsibilities to allow each individual to focus on particular responsibilities. The school director, Cynthia A. Diamond, provides the administrative leadership to all personnel in carrying out the goals and objectives of the school, while the school principal shares in the administration of the day-to-day operations of the school, grant writing, curriculum development and teacher evaluations. (As noted above, the school is in the process of hiring a new principal.) DeNeen Owens-Collins, business manager/start-up coordinator, monitors the school's budget, compiles all financial information, writes grants and serves as the liaison to the Indiana Department of Education and the charter school sponsor. Libby Scott, director of public relations and communications, is responsible for community outreach, recruitment planning and materials, media relations and grant writing.

School governance

- The members of Flanner House Higher Learning Center's Board of Directors are responsible for ensuring that the mission and vision of the school are maintained and oversee staff members' steady pursuit of that mission and vision. The Board is responsible for setting general curricular policies and reviewing specific curriculum choices on a regular basis; hiring and evaluating the performance of the school director; and setting overall school policies. The Board currently has 6 members, and has implemented a recruitment process to expand to 9 members. The Board is currently composed of a social worker, a child psychologist, a community leader, a public relations/marketing professional, a businessman with an MBA, and a corporate executive.

Facilities

- Flanner House Higher Learning Center is housed on the campus of Flanner House of Indianapolis on the near northwest side of Indianapolis. The classes are held in temporary modular buildings that accommodate the current enrollment. The layout consists of two computer labs, two seminar rooms for trainings and for reference materials, and a student lounge/cafeteria room that also serves as a meeting and special-events area. An attached modular building houses the main school office, a reception area, individual offices for the principal and other staff, and a small conference room. Over the summer additional modular facilities will be added to accommodate planned increases in enrollment. The school's long-term plan involves the renovation of a nearby existing building to create a permanent facility.

Planned improvements for the upcoming school year

- In April 2004, the Higher Learning Center joined the Network of Effective Small Schools of Indianapolis, an initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The school was awarded a planning grant to develop innovative assessments and project-based learning activities to enhance and reinforce the school's computerized coursework.